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Omnia Comesta a Belo.

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G.C.9380

O R.

An ANSWER

Out of the WEST

T O

A QUESTION

Out of the NORTH.

W H E R E I N

The Earth is opened, and the Napkin found, in which the Trading Talent of the Nation hath been tyed up, and lyen hid for some Years last passed ; for want of which, all Persons in *England*, from the Tenant to the Landlord, from the Weaver to the Merchant, have languished of a deep Consumption.

Sir Fr. Bacon, Ess. of Sedition and Troubles, Chap. 15. Pag. 85.
Above all things, good Policy is to be used, that the Treasure and Money in a State be not gathered into few hands, for otherwise a State may have a great Stock and yet starve : and Money is like Muck, not good except it be spread.

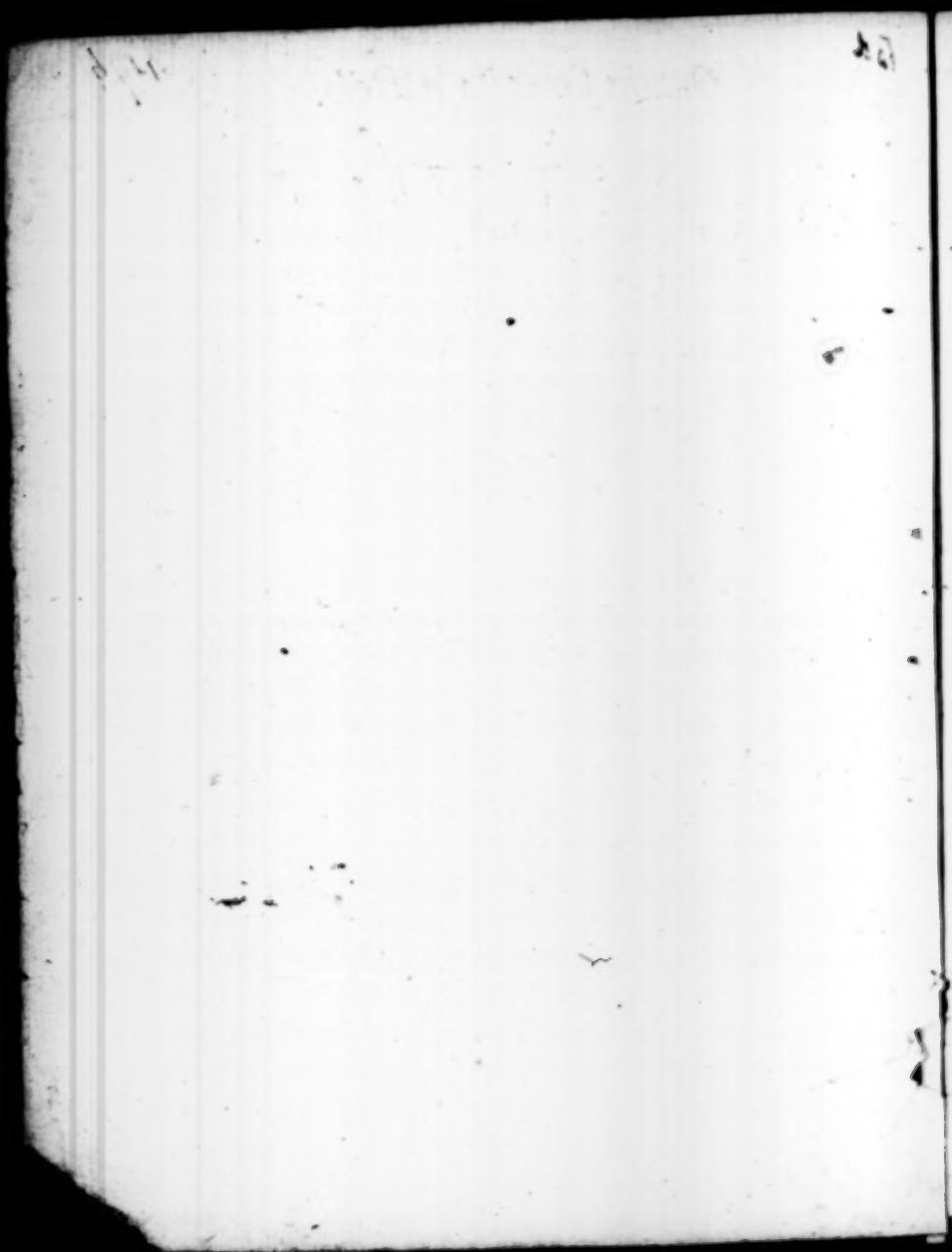
Idem, Pag. 172. The Blessings of Judah and Issachar will never meet, that the same People or Nation shoule be both the Lyons Whelp, and the Ass between two Burdens : neither will it be, That a People over-laid with Taxes should ever become Martial and Valiant.

Hist. of Bell and the Dragon, Vers. 8. So the King was wrath, and called for his Priests, and said unto them, If ye tell me not who it is that hath devoured these expences, ye shall dye. Vers. 20, 21. And the King said, I see the foot-steps of Men, Women and Children : and the King was angry, and took the Priests with their Wives and Children, who shewed him the privy Door where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the Table.

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Omnia Comesta a Belo.

O R,

An ANSWER out of the WEST,

T O

A QUESTION out of the
NORTH, &c.

S I R,

I Must beg your pardon that I have so long tired your expectations, and which is worse have altogether failed them, except the few Scraps you find in this Reply will stop the mouth of your first *Query*; for as to the four last, I have neither Time nor Capacity to send you any thing that may claim the Title of a Reslove.

Yet that others more able may contribute towards an Answer to your so Seasonable and Rational Demands, and that you may not think I have forgot them, I shall here insert them in order as you proposed.

Query I.

Whether the great Cause of Impoverishing the Nation, Ruine of Trade, and general consumption of Comfort, Settlement and Content, which hath brought the Land to a meer Anatomy, is not caused by the Pomp, Pride, Luxury, Exaltion and Oppressions of the Prelates?

Query II.

Whether, Since all other Reformed Churches in Europe, did upon the first Reformation and departure from Popery, cast out all Diocesan Bi-

Bishops, Name and Thing, Root and Branch, as an Office altogether Pish, together with all their Hierarchical appurtenances, and do to this day esteem of them no otherwise; why did not, or doth not England also do the like?

Query III.

Whether the several Reformed Countries beyond the Seas, did not take into the hands of their Supream Governors all the Lordly Revenues of the Prelates, and reserve them for Publick use, or dispose part of them to such persons as had well deserved of them, in the faithful service of their Country; and if so, whether it might not be of good and great concern to this Kingdom, for the Lordships and Baronies belonging to so many useless persons, to be disposed of by Publick Authority, for Publick Good; and more especially for the honourable maintenance of those worthy Persons and their Posterity, who have lost their Blood and Estates in the Kings service, and at present lye under great discouragements, and bleeding wounds in their Temporals, for want of a Suitable Retompence: whilst these, who put them altogether, never did half the service, nor if occasion should require, never can, as one of these Heroick Gentlemen, yet as Ecclesiasticks are rewarded with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 thousand pounds per annum, a man?

Query IV.

Whether in those Kingdoms and States where Prelacy is extirpated, and a Presbytery only retained, there be not as Godly, Able, Orthodox Preachers, and as constant Preaching as in this Kingdom; and more especially, whether their Subjects are not as cordially Obedient, and as free from any Rebellion, as in these places, where Bishops are retained? and also, Whether the Councils are not more free from molestation, their Nobility and Gentry free from Afronts, and the Commonalty more free from Oppression, where the Prelates are disabled from sitting in Council, from Peaking above the Nobles, and from imposing upon the Commons?

Query V.

Whether the present State of Affairs in our Neighbour Nations, especially of France, who have a Prodigious Victorious Army, a Fleet still lying at Rochel, a fit place from whence to invade us; and the gre-
in-

industry of the Pope employed to divert their Armes from Spain, and turning them upon some other design; whether I say it be not reasonable to consider of some way to engage all hearts and hands in this Nation unanimously to oppose all Invasions, rather than to multiply Discouragements upon the Body of the People by Episcopal Oppressions?

In Answer to your first, I am by many Reasons induced to conclude in the Affirmative, *That the cause of Impoverishing the Nation, Ruine of Trade, and general consumption of Comfort, Settlement and Content, is caused by the Pomp, Pride, Luxury, Exaltion and Oppression of the Prelates.*

It is a true Maxime of the Learned *Virgil*, "A smaller number that spend more, and earn less, do wear out an Estate sooner, than a greater number that live lower, and gather more: So it is with an over-grown Clergy, for they bring nothing to the Stock."

That the Trading Stock of the Nation is devoted in this Prelatical Gulph, I shall demonstrate, by laying open to View the black back-door and sink that hath drained the Trading Purse dry.

First, The Revenues, Pomp and State of the Prelates.

There are two Provincial Archbishops, *Canterbury* and *York*; with their Princely Retinue, Domestick Chaplains, Officers for Temporalities, their Spiritual Officers, Vicar-General, Guardian of the Spiritualities, Dean of the Arches, with all their under Officers and Attendants.

Secondly, His Courts.

Court of Faculties.
Court of Audience.
Prerogative Court.
Delegates.

There are four and twenty Bishops Diocesan, with their Trains, Domestick Servants, Chaplains, Officers and Courts.

To

To these belong,

- 26 Chancellours and their Attendants.
- 24 Registers with their Clerks.
- 24 Gentlemen Apparators.
- 120 Inferior Apparators.
- 48 Proctors.

There are under these Bishops,

- 60 Arch-Deacons, and these have 60 Courts, to which belong
Commissaries.
- Officials.
- Surrogates.
- 60 Registers.
- 120 Proctors.
- 200 Apparators.

So that the Number belonging to Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Arch-Deacons, and their Trade, are judged to be no less than *ten thousand Persons*; which will require for their Maintenance, *Two hundred thousand pounds per annum*, reckoning them at *twenty pounds a man*; whereas some of them have *one hundred pound*, some *two hundred pounds*, some *four hundred pounds*, squeezed out of the poor People

As for their standing Rents they are well known.

Their Lordly Palaces, sumptuous Houses, Ecclesiastical Dignities, Baronies, &c. *vij. s. & modis*, such is their Income that it amounts at least to *Four hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year*.

They have many other wayes to enrich themselves and impoverish the Nation, As

First,

By Ordaining Deacons and Ministers four times a year for Money, by which they put up yearly hundreds of Pounds.

Secondly,

Secondly,

By Instituting and Inducting Parsons and Vicars to Benefices when they fall : For every such Institution and Induction they have *Three pounds* at least. And in *England* there are 9285 *Parishes*, so that at the rate of one in a *Parish*, it amounts to *Twenty seven thousand eight hundred fifty five pounds*.

Thirdly,

By making Rural Deans yearly, and for the Oath taking, they pay *Eight shillings and six pence*.

Fourthly,

By granting Licences to Beneficed Ministers to Preach in their own Cures ; though they be Ordained before, and strictly commanded to preach, yet they must not do it without a Licence, and this Licence costs them *Ten shillings*, so that in 9285 *Parishes*, this comes to *Four thousand six hundred forty two pound ten shillings*.

Fifthly,

- By granting,
1. Licences to Curats to Preach.
 2. Licences for Schoolmasters to teach School.
 3. Licences for Parish Clerks.
 4. Licences to Physitians to practise Physick.
 5. Licences to Midwives to do their Office.
 6. Licences to Marry, which thing of it self ariseth to a vast Revenue.

For Absolving Excommunicated persons.

For putting men to clear themselves by Oath, with their Compurgators.

For Commutation of Penance, for so the Rich come off with a round sum of Money, but the poor doing their Pen-

Penance in kind, must stand Excommunicated until they have paid their Fees.

Sixtly,

By Probats of Wills, and granting Letters of Administration, which brings in constantly great Summers of Money.

Seventhly,

By framing New Articles, and forcing Churchwardens to Present upon Oath, whereby many Innocent persons are brought into their Courts, and squeezed both in Conscience and Purse; and so is the Churchwarden also, if he do not take the Oath prepared for him.

By their Visitations for Money.

First, Churchwardens of every Parish in England and Chappel are called, who receive a Book of Articles to Present by ; if any are wanting, they are warned to appear at their Courts with Costs. These Churchwardens pay for their Book of Articles every year, (though the very same) as also for writing their Presentments by a Clark (which they themselves could do, but are not permitted) two shillings four pence ; which in 9285 Parishes cometh to One thousand fifty eight pounds odd money, yearly.

Secondly, Ministers that are Licensed pay One shilling eight pence, or thereabouts, for shewing their Licence to preach, to the Register, at every Bishops Visitation, though seen and allowed before ; after that, Four shillings for Procuration to the Bishop ; and to the Gentleman Apparator eight pence, though most pay twelve pence.

I shall omit the poor Curats Suit and Service at this Court, only let you know, That when any Arch-Bishop comes newly to York, all the Parsons and Vicars in his Jurisdiction, though never so poor, and their charge never so great, give him a tenth of their Livings for a Benevolence, to help the poor Bishop to settle himself in Five or six

or six thousand pounds a year; and if any, yea, the meanest Vicar, whose poor Children want Bread, do through poverty omit the payment, this Reverend Father doth pittifullly whip him to the very bones in his merciless Spiritual Court.

By Arch=Deacons Visitations.

These are twice a year. At *Easter* Visitation the Ministers pay their *Pascal Rents*, or *Synodals*, which sums are not alike to all; some pay, 56 some less.

At *Michaelmas* they pay *Procurations*, some *seven shillings*, some *ten shillings*, some less. But it is judged that Ministers pay yearly at Visitations *Five thousand pounds* and upwards.

By the vast Charges in Collegiat Churches.

There are twenty six great Deans with their Attendants and Servants.

544 Canons, Residents and Prebendaries, with a numerous train of
 Vicars,
 Peti-Canons,
 Singing Men and Boyes, Choristers,
 Organists,
 Gospellers,
 Epistles,
 Virgers.

Now this Jovial Crew have belonging to them, about *Four hundred thousand pounds yearly*, in Lands, Rents, Leases, and other Revenues and Profits thereunto belonging.

The excessive Expences that many thousand of the Trading People of the Nation are put unto, by the Rigorous and Tyrannical proceedings of the Bishops, in Excommunicating persons, for three pence, six pence, and very trivial things.

A Catalogue may shortly be presented to you of the many Families already undone by them ; wherein it will be made manifest, That more Families have been Ruined, more Persons Imprisoned, more Money Spent by the Cruelty of the Prelates proceedings, than by all Law-Suites in all Courts of Judicature, all Payments and Taxes whatsoeuer, except upon the late Extraordinary Occasion.

The vast sums of Money that the Bishops, Deans, &c. have treasured up, extorting it from the Subjects for Fines.

You know that for Twenty Years sometime by-past, their Revenues were alienated, and sold for great sums of Money to the Natives of England. Those who bought them had greatly improved them, who being some thousands of Families, are undone by being turned out without any Consideration. The Bishops enter at a time when most of the Old Leases were expired, they proclaim their Markets, he that gives most, Friend or Foe, he shall be taken Tenant ; they screw up the value to the height, and hereby they have drained out of the Peoples Purses such Sums of Money, that amounts to so Monstrous a Mass, that scarce any Princes Treasury in Europe is able to ballance it ; in the mean time, the Money that before ran currant in Trading, is Damned up in their Coffers.

Hereby the Money that should carry on Trade, is Ingrossed into the hands of a few Rusty Ecclesiasticks, who neither serve our Lord Jesus Christ, nor their Country, but their own Bellies, and hoard

up

up the Riches, that should be as the Blood in the *Vena pectora*, to be Distributed into every Vein and Part of the Body ; but by being choked up in their *Corban*, brings the whole Nation into a *Consumption*.

And its very considerable, That in all other Trades, Men have something for their Money : The Farmer hath good Lands for his Money from the Gentleman; the Clothier hath good Wooll from the Farmer for his Money ; the Merchant hath good Cloth from the Clothier for his Money ; and thus it goes round to every ones benefit. But pray, what have we from the Bishops for our Money ? The Answer will readily be made by the major part of the Land.

First,

We have all our Able, Godly, Orthodox Ministers turned out, ruined and beggard, and no manner of Supply provided for the maintenance of them and their Families ; and in their roomes, in many places, a company of Debauched, Illiterate, Superstitions, Profane Priests, which, Blind-guides, must needs lead them that follow them to Hell.

Secondly,

We have gotten most of our Churchwardens Perjured, that do Swear to Present according to their Visitation Articles, and most of them undone that do not Swear ; although the imposing of such an Oath is a breach of the Fundamental Laws of the Land. Those Churchwardens that are not perjured, but pursue the Oath in persecuting their Neighbours, are plunged into such horrid guilt, that without serious Repentance, they must perish eternally, for they persecute the Godly for godliness sake, the Righteous for righteousness sake, as will appear in these following Instances.

I. If a Minister never so Godly and Able, yea, though Ordained, Preach without a Licence from the Bishop, the Churchwarden is bound to present him and bring him into trouble: if he Preach in a Cloak, and not in a Garment Canonical, he is bound to do the like.

II. If any person go to hear a Sermon from his own Parish Church, though there be no Preaching-Minister there, nor no Sermon at all ; and though he be bound by his Vow in Baptism to hear Sermons, this man is to be presented.

III. If a poor man that hath not Bread for his Family, but what

he earneth by his daily Labour, If he work upon a Holy-day, appointed by *Romish* Institution, he is to be presented.

I V. If any person coming to Church to their service, do not Stand Up at the Creed, do not Bow at the Name of Jesus, do not keep Off his Hat all the while, he must be Presented.

Now there are in all, *Threescore and fourteen thousand Churchwardens and Sides-men* in England every year, and what a dreadful thing is it to have all these yearly, either, *Perjured, Persecutors or Persecuted.*

Thirdly,

We have gotten most of the Sober Trading part of the Nation Discouraged by Citations, Excommunications, Writs to take them Excommunicated, Imprisonments upon Ecclesiastical accounts; by this means, thousands of Families are already ruined, and many hundreds are ready to leave the Land, and remove into some other Country, where they may have Liberty of Conscience, and Freedom from these devouring Harpies.

Fourthly,

We have got in stead of the Gospel in the Power and Purity of it, a Service collected out of the *Romish Books*, the *Mas*, *Breviary*, &c. which Service of ours, King James called *an ill sung Mas*. We have got Surplices, Copes, Tippets, Chringings, &c. out of the *Romish Rituals*, insomuch that the Papists themselves call it *An Apish imitation of the Mas*.

Fifthly,

We have gotten a swarm of Ecclesiastical Officers, which the Scriptures never knew, nor Reformed Churches ever owned.

Sixtly,

We have got a sort of proud Prelates, of mean Extract, not of the highest rank for Godliness, Learning and Labour in the Word, nor the greatest Champions for the Protestant Religion; witness their Silence at such a time when Popery hath so travelled to bring forth; so many Popish Books Printed and Published in *England*, in affront and contempt of the Reformed Religion, yet not one of our Bishops hath stood up in opposition to their design, nor Printed any Caution against Popery, or Answer to the Popish pernicious Pamphlets. However very elate they are, affronting our Nobility, trampling upon our Gentry, grinding to powder all that put not into their Mouthes, or offer not at their Shrine; insomuch that a Gentle-

Gentlemen of Quality, a Person, of 3000*l.* per annum, speaking to one of the said Prelates (lately dead) boldly, but with due respect; the Prelate, in a fume, answered, *What, Sir, do you think that it is fit for every Jack Gentleman to speak thus to a Bishop;* deriding the Gentry of our Land, as not worthy to speak to a peevish Prelate. Surely a Gentleman of 500*l.* per annum would have fallen under censure for presuming to speak to his Postilian.

We have gotten all manner of misery to Soul and Body, Plague, Fire, Sword, Universal Beggary, and without seasonable Mercy, the total Ruine of the whole Kingdom.

But I know you will question, whether our Miseries do arise from the Cause Assigned?

To this I answer, The manifold provoking sins of the Land, as Adultery, Blasphemy, S swearing, Idolatry, Perjury, and contempt of God and Godliness, do pull hard with Heaven to bring down desolating Judgments. But that the nearest cause of our impoverishments ariseth from the particular forementioned, will appear, if you weigh the Premises before inserted, and give them leave to speak their own conclusion: if Perjury causeth a Land to mourn, if Oppression and riggid Persecution upon the Trading part of a Land begets Discontent and deserting of Trade; if vigorous exacting, and sordid hoarding up the Money that shou'd run currant in Trade, and that by such who contribute nothing to the Publick Weal, be the bane of Traffick, and the famishment of the poor Handicrafts-man, then we may lay all our Calamities at the Bishops doors.

I shall call in some credible Witneses, Divines and Martyrs to confirm this Truth, and so leave it with you.

Bishop Jewel on Hag. x. records out of *Johannes Parisiensis*, and others, 'That when Constantine the great advanced Bishops, and endowed the Church with Lands and Temporal Possessions, there was a voice of Angels heard in the Air, saying, *Hodie venimus infunditum in Ecclesiam,* This day Poyson is poured into the Church.'

Bernard writes, 'Since Prelates increased in Worldly pomp, chusing the first places in the Church, they have been the chiefest in

in persecuting Jesus Christ ; and have ever shewed themselves
not Teachers, But Deceivers ; not Pastors, but Impostors ; not
Prelates, but Pilates ; succeeding not Peter in teaching, but Ro-
mulus in murthering.

Lord Cobham, that faithfull Martyr, saith to the Bishops, ' No
ground have ye in all the Scriptures, so Lordly to take it upon you,
but in Annas and Caiaphas, who sate in Judgment upon Christ
and his Apostles, of them only have you taken it to judge Christ's
Members as ye do.

Mr Tindal, that Godly and learned Martyr, writeth, ' Wo to the
Realm where Prelates are of the Council ! as profitable are the
Prelacy to the Realm with their Counsel, as Wolves to the Sheep,
or Foxes to the Geese ; for there is no mischief or disorder, whether
it be in the Temporal Regiment or Spiritual, whereof they are
not the chief causes, and even the very Fountain and Spring ; so
that it is impossible to preach against any mischief, except thou
begin at them ; or to set up any Reformation in the World, ex-
cept they are first reformed : They are as indurat as Pharaoh,
and therefore persecute they God's Word, and the Preachers
thereof ; they stir up mischief in the World, setting Princes to
War ; they get into the Consciences of Kings, and persyade
them what they list, neither can any King have rest for them ;
they pretend they are for God and the Church, but their secret in-
tent is to bring all under their power ; and when they once are set
high, then are they Tyrants above all Tyrants.

Mr John Frith, that worthy Martyr, in his Answer to Mr.
Moor's Preface. ' Since Sylvester received such Possessions hath
the Canker so crept into the Church, that it hath almost left ne-
ver a sound Member ; then instead of Gods Word they preached
their own Commandments, and made Laws to have all under
them ; and even as in the rooms of Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb,
and other such faithfull Leaders, came Herod, Annas, Caiaphas,
Pilate, and Judas, which put Christ to death : So now instead of
Christ, Peter, Paul, James, John, and the faithfull Followers of
Christ, we have Popes, Cardinals, Arch-bishops, and proud Pre-
lates, with their Proctors and malitious Ministers of their Ma-
ster the Devil, whose end shall be according to their works.

Dr Barnes in his Supplication to Henry the eighth, ' Now it is

so far come, that whosoever he be, high or low, rich or poor, wise or foolish, that speaketh against the Prelates, and their vicious living, he is either made a Traytor to your Grace, or an Heretick, Enemy or Scismatick against holy Churche; as though the Prelates were Kings or Gods: and if any man out of Gods Law, and right conscience speak against their damnable Tyranny, little will they stick to make him an Heretick; and if that will not help to colour and maintain their oppression, then add they Treason, Sedition, Rebellion, and contempt of your Grace, though he be never so true a Subject.

I shall conclude with a Passage of learned Mr Tindal in his *Obedience to a Christian Magistrate*, p. 114, 128, 146.

As thou canst heal no Disease except thou begin at the Root, even so canst thou preach against no mischief except thou begin at the Bishops; whether *Judas* was a Priest or no, I care not, but of this I am sure, That he now is not only Priest, but also a Bishop, Cardinal, and Pope. Bishops that preach not, or that preach ought save Gods Word, are none of Christs, nor of his anointing; but Servants of the Beast, whose Mark they bear, whose Word they preach, whose Law they maintain, clean against Gods Law: Bishops they are that can only minister the Temporal Sword, their Office, the preaching of Gods Word, laid aside; which they will neither do themselves, nor suffer any man else to do, but slay with the Temporal Sword (which they have gotten out of the hands of all Princes) them that would: The preaching of Gods Word is hatefull to them; Why? For it is impossible to preach Christ except thou preach against Antichrist; that is to say, them who with their false Doctrine, and violence of Sword, enforce to quench the True Doctrine of Christ. Our Prelates ought to be our Servants, as the Apostles were, to teach us Christs Doctrine, and not Lords over us, to oppress us with their own Doctrines and Inventions.

